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Subject: MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR  
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May 28, 1999

Dear Fellow Employees:

Instead of my regular weekly message to employees discussing events and happenings, I have decided to use this column as a forum to discuss broader issues and concerns that I want to bring to the attention of all FAA employees. I want to start with the issue of internal communications.

Communications are at the heart of our mission. Whether talking with pilots, providing flight information to the cockpit via data link, or developing a data-driven safety agenda, the business of the FAA is communications and its primary tools are data and information. We spend millions of dollars every year developing better sources of data and information and devising better ways to disseminate them. Yet, when it comes to communicating with one another, we don't do nearly as well as we should. You have told us this loud and clear in the employee attitude survey, and a recent study by an outside independent communications consultant underscored this same message.

It's not that we don't disseminate a wealth of data and information. However, there is a critical distinction between data, information, and communications. The dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University was recently quoted in a magazine as saying: "The information explosion has brought us more information but not more understanding. The common phrase 'the facts speak for themselves' just ain't true."

Since becoming Administrator, I have seen how important internal communications are to our success, and recently I have asked Jerry Lavey to join my staff to work with the lines of business to improve internal communications within the agency. The initial focus will be on getting information out to all employees quickly and in a clear, candid, and straightforward manner.

However, let me be quick to add that communications cannot be wholly delegated. It is the responsibility of us all. Management is the key for transforming information into communications. All the literature tells us that job satisfaction depends heavily on the relationships

between employees and their immediate supervisors, and open, honest communications is the key to that relationship. Therefore, I have made it clear that I expect my top management team to take a leadership role and to make internal communications part of their management strategy and style. I also expect managers and supervisors up and down the line to do the same.

By the same token, communications is a two-way street, and I urge all employees to lay aside fear or skepticism about what may have gone on in the past and to get involved. If we want to become more effective and realize this agency's true potential, we need to start talking and listening to one another better, and we need to do this in a candid, but civil and professional manner. I will discuss this further in an upcoming Administrator's message.

Meantime, I would appreciate hearing your feedback and reactions. I can't promise a personal response to each and every comment, but I can promise I will read and carefully consider them.

Sincerely,

Jane F. Garvey  
Administrator

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